

Long-Waterman House
2408 First Avenue
San Diego
San Diego County
California

HABS No. CA-1964

HABS
CAL,
37-SANDI,
20-

PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LONG-WATERMAN HOUSE

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Location: 2408 First Avenue, San Diego County, California

Present Owner: Mr. Robert Woolman

Present Use: Dwelling

Significance: The Long-Waterman House is one of the grandest of the great Bankers' Hill mansions constructed in the boom period of 1880's. A major example of the American "Queen Anne" style, it is in an excellent state of preservation, having remained in a single family from 1897 to the present. Prior to this, the house was the home of California Governor Robert Whitney Waterman.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original owner and builder of the house: Mr. and Mrs. John S. Long bought the three lots for \$5000 on January 18, 1889 from John W. Collins and started construction shortly after. The Longs began to have financial difficulties and in June 1890 deeded the lots and partially completed house back to John W. Collins.

Mr. Collins then deeded the property to Jane G. Waterman, wife of Governor Robert Whitney Waterman, for a stated consideration of \$17,000. The Watermans completed the house in its present form.

The house was then purchased in 1897 by Fred A. Hart for his daughter Florence and her husband, Dr. A. H. Gilbert. Mrs. Gilbert continued to live in the house (even after her husband's death) until her death in 1976.

2. Date of erection: Erection of the house and carriage house began shortly after the Longs purchased the lots on January 18, 1889. The home was completed by September 1889, by the Watermans.
3. Architect: The architect-builder was D. P. Benson, however, most of the materials and workmen were supplied by Mr. Long since he owned a very profitable veneer business located on Coronado Beach. Part of the interior of the house is paneled with a finely finished and highly polished redwood. It was stated that it required six men laboring six months to give the woodwork its lustrous finish.
4. Builder: D. P. Benson of the firm Benson and Reif. He was noted as being the architect and builder of several other fine residences in San Diego. According to the Golden Era Magazine

he was also the architect of the Sisters of St. Joseph's Convent, C. M. Johnson's house and the residence of Dr. Powers at A Street in San Diego. As far as is known none of these structures still remain.

5. Alterations and additions: There have been very few additions or alterations made to this home. The house was wired for electricity in 1908; central heating was installed in 1942. A porch at the west of the house has been enclosed.

B. Historical Context:

1. John S. Long: John S. Long was the builder of the house. He was, together with E. S. Babcock, a founder of the Coronado Fruit Package Company. This business, located on Coronado Beach, included the operation of the largest rotary veneer machine in the United States.
2. Robert Whitney Waterman: Waterman was governor of California from 1887-1890. He was born in 1826 in New York but moved at a young age to Illinois. In 1850 he went to California with the gold rush, but returned shortly afterwards. In 1873 he returned to California and became involved with silver mining, buying the Stonewall Mine at Julian near San Diego. He was elected lieutenant governor in 1886 and at the death of the incumbent succeeded to the governorship. He was married to the former Miss Jane Gardner, who survived him. She sold the house in 1895.
3. Dr. Alfred H. Gilbert: Dr. Gilbert, whose wife, Florence Hart, inherited the house in 1937, was a prominent San Diego dentist. His widow, Gilbert still lives here.

C. Bibliography:

1. Old Views: There is an old view of the house in the collection of the Title Insurance Co. Neg. FEP 924 reproduced for inclusion as HABS No. CA-1964-1.
2. Publications: Golden Era Magazine, September 1889, Vol. 38, No. 9, p. 454.

"Summary Report, Historical Site Board of San Diego" on file in the Planning Department, City of San Diego, researched by Mary Ward. This an excellent compendium of information available on the house.

Prepared by: Robert Bruegmann
Historian, HABS San
Diego Project
Summer 1975

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of Stories: This is a two-story house with unfinished attic and partial basement.
2. Layout, Shape: The house is basically rectangular with a number of projecting bays and curved walls, making a very irregular plan.
3. Overall dimensions: 45' x 47'.
4. Foundations: The foundations are of concrete and vary substantially in thickness.
5. Wall construction: The wood frame structure is finished between the water table and belt course with flush siding with recessed joints and corner boards. The second story and attic gable ends are finished with shingles in various batteries.
6. Porches: The front porch of the house curves out from the southern bay and then swings in a large arch around the corner tower. The wood porch is reached from the east (First Street) and from the north by four wooden risers. Below the porch floor the area is filled with lattice work. The porch roof, which is slightly sloped and covered with shingles, is supported by eleven turned columns with fan-like brackets supporting spindled lattice work. Balusters are rectangular in section, infilled with elaborate spindle and pierced elements.

The back porch on the west side of the house is reached by ten risers. The shed roof has end panels with a fan pattern. The walls are all infilled with lattice work between the 5" square columns.

A balcony accessible from the attic is located above the two-story projecting bay on the south elevation. The third level corner tower (NE) is treated as a covered porch area, and is accessible from the attic. A bell-shaped dome covers this tower porch.

8. Chimneys: The house has three brick chimneys; two exterior and one interior. The chimneys are highly ornamented with brick recesses, arches, and corbelling.

9. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors: Both doors giving access to the front porch are elaborately carved with raised panel sections. The doors are identically carved on the interior as well.

Windows:

- a. First Floor: The first floor has twenty-three double hung, one-over-one windows. Six of these enclose a porch in the southeast corner and have plain trim. The other double hung windows have architrave trim. The first floor also has two large fixed windows within elliptical arched openings with stained glass in the top part of the openings. These windows have arched architrave trim and a carved hood molding. One other fixed window with stained glass is located to the right of the main entry.
- b. Second Floor: The second floor has twenty-six double-hung, one-over-one windows.
- c. Attic: The attic has an arched opening providing access to the balcony above the bay window. The center of the arch is a wooden door with a large single pane of glass. The side panels are glazed. Two other gable ends have large double hung, one-over-one windows flanked by two smaller ones. The attic also has three eyebrow windows with leaded panes.

10. Roof:

- a. Shape: The major roof shape is a large hip with a widow's walk and gables intersecting the hip at right angles. One gable extends to the east, one to the south, two to the west, and one to the north. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice: The roof has a heavily molded cornice with dentils. Several inches above the cornice is a small wooden gutter with wood brackets.
- c. Dormers: The hipped roof has three eyebrow dormers.
- d. Towers, Turret: The northeast corner of the house has a corner tower that is enclosed to the cornice. Above the cornice the tower opens to create a porch. The parapet supports five turned columns and capitals with arched

spandrels between. These, in turn, support a raised panel drum and bell-shaped dome. The dome is covered with diamond-shaped shingles and topped with a wrought-iron weather vane.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: See the drawings accompanying this written report for the plans. Sheets 2-4 contain plans for the basement, first and second floors.
2. Stairway: The stairway ascends to the north to a large landing that is half circular. Three risers ascend to the west to another landing. The risers then ascend to the south. The stairs are open-string with the string being molded and paneled. The newels are about a foot square in section with a molded base, panels, and carved cap or crown. The heavily molded balusters have swan neck curves as they meet the carved posts on the landings. Below the railings are elaborate spindle and carved elements.
3. Flooring: The entry has multi-colored inlaid tiles. The center section has hexagonal pieces separated by small diamond shapes. A border runs around the entire perimeter. This flooring pattern continues into the servant's hallway. The major floor and second floor rooms are carpeted. The servant areas have 2" hardwood floors.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: The walls and ceilings are wood lath and plaster. All major rooms have been papered, and have carved picture moldings and molded baseboards. The hall and servant's hall elaborately paneled wainscoting. Beneath the heavily molded chair rail are two tiers of carved panels and a molded baseboard.
5. Doorways and Doors: The interior of the main entry is paneled identically to its exterior face. The first floor has double pocket doors between the hall and drawing room. The dining room has two pocket doors, one connecting to the drawing room and one to the hall. All major doors, upstairs and down, have four tiers of carved panels. These panels are further decorated by diagonal grooving. Doors to the major bedrooms have transoms.

6. Special Decorative Features:

Fireplaces:

- a. Hall: The foyer fireplace has a rectangular opening with a marble architrave. Fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals support a moulded mantel shelf and carved frieze.

- b. Drawing Room: The drawing room fireplace has a cast-iron fire screen within a rectangular opening. The molded cornice, carved frieze and end blocks are supported on colonettes. The overmantel contains a mirror.
- c. Northeast Bedroom: The northeast bedroom fireplace is similar to that in the hall. It has, however, carving and spindles above the mantel, which create shelves and nooks.
- d. Southwest Bedroom: The fireplace of the southwest bedroom has a cast-iron plate closing off the rectangular opening. The fireplace surround has large smooth reverse curves which support the molded cornice. This fireplace also has the spindles and shelves, with a centered mirror in the overmantel.
- e. Drawing Room Screen: An elaborately carved screen divides the drawing room into two areas. The spindle lattice work spans two columns and pilasters at the walls. The lower portions of the columns are fluted. The upper portions have carved flower motifs and continuously turned corner rods.

C. Site and Surroundings:

- 1. General Site: The Long-Waterman House is located on the corner of First Avenue and Kalmia Street. The main entry and porch are towards the east, facing First Avenue.
- 2. Outbuildings: A carriage house is located on the extreme northwest corner of the property, having access from First Avenue by a driveway that crosses the property east to west. The carriage house has a major gable running north to south and a minor gable centered on the east facade at right angles to the major ridge. The buildings are finished in flush boarding with recessed joints and corner boards. The east elevation has one large sliding door at ground level and a glazed and paneled door above in the gable. Each gable is decorated with a turned finial and pierced panel. The major ridge is capped at the center by a cupola, which has two intersecting gable roofs. Each face is louvered. To the south of the carriage house is a wooden shed with shed roof. This structure has two doors; each with two tiers of molded panels. See sheet No. 8 for elevations and plans of these subsidiary structures.

Prepared by: Kim Spurgeon
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Summer 1975

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